

Message Text

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ORIGIN NEA-09

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WHITE HOUSE MR. OAKLEY

S/S:MR. EALUM

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TREASURY:HSHAPRIO(INFO) NEA:ADUBS

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY COLOMBO IMMEDIATE

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E.O. 11652:DECLASSIFIED UPON RECEIPT

TAGS: EAID, CE

SUBJECT: PRIME MINISTER'S LETTERS TO PRESIDENT

REF: STATE 77266

1. FOLLOWING ARE TEXTS OF MARCH 21 AND MARCH 24 LETTERS FROM PRIME MINISTER TO PRESIDENT CITED REFTEL. PRESIDENT'S REPLY IS BEING SENT SEPTEL FOR DELIVERY BY SECRETARY SIMON IF POSSIBLE.
2. TEXT OF MARCH 21 LETTER: QUOTE MY DEAR PRESIDENT, I HAVE HEARD FROM YOUR AMBASSADOR IN SRI LANKA AS WELL AS FROM OUR AMBASSADOR IN WASHINGTON THAT THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT HAS DECIDED TO ALLOCATE A SUM OF U.S. DOLLARS 24.5 MILLION TO SRI LANKA FOR THE PURCHASE OF APPROXIMATELY 100,000 METRIC TONS OF WHEAT FLOUR UNDER PL 480.

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I AM WRITING TO YOU TO CONVEY MY PERSONAL APPRECIATION AND THANKS AS WELL AS THAT OF MY GOVERNMENT FOR THIS IMPORTANT AS WELL AS TIMELY GESTURE.

AS YOU ARE AWARE SRI LANKA HAS BEEN BUFFETED IN RECENT YEARS BY THE HIGH PRICES OF COMMODITIES WHICH SHE IMPORTS,

INCLUDING FOOD COMMODITIES, AND HAS ALSO BEEN UNFORTUNATE TO HAVE HAD THE EXPERIENCE OF FACING UP TO SEVERAL YEARS OF PARTIAL DROUGHT WITHIN THE LAST 5 YEARS THUS AFFECTING CONSIDERABLY OUR CAPACITY TO FEED OURSELVES ADEQUATELY. WE ARE AT THE MOMENT FACING ONE OF THE WORST DROUGHTS IN OUR RECENT HISTORY WHICH HAS SERIOUSLY AFFECTED THE TRADITIONAL RICE GROWING AREAS OF THE COUNTRY. WE, THEREFORE, EXPECT A CONSIDERABLE REDUCTION IN OUR RICE CROP THIS YEAR THUS COMPOUNDING OUR DIFFICULTIES AND PLACING AN ALMOST INTOLERABLE BURDEN ON OUR FOREIGN EXCHANGE RESOURCES WHICH HAVE TO BE DEPLOYED TO IMPORT MORE FOOD. IT IS IN THIS CONTEXT THAT THE DECISION OF YOUR GOVERNMENT HAS COME AS A WELCOME MEASURE OF RELIEF TO SRI LANKA.

WE ARE ALSO GRATEFUL FOR THE ASSISTANCE THAT THE GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA HAS GIVEN US IN THE MATTER OF FERTILIZER IN RECENT TIMES. WE ARE ENCOURAGED BY THIS SUPPORT TO PRESS ON EVEN MORE DILIGENTLY TO MAKE OURSELVES SELF-SUFFICIENT IN OUR BASIC FOOD COMMODITIES, AND I MYSELF HAVE TAKEN THE INITIATIVE TO ATTEND TO THIS TASK INSPITE OF THE MANY SET BACKS WE HAVE BEEN RECEIVING.

WE LOOK FORWARD TO THE CONTINUED SUPPORT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA IN THE TASK OF DEVELOPMENT AND RECONSTRUCTION THAT WE HAVE UNDERTAKEN IN ORDER TO PROVIDE A BETTER AND HAPPIER LIFE FOR OUR PEOPLE.

MAY I ONCE AGAIN THANK YOU MOST SINCERELY,

WITH KIND REGARDS, YOUR SINCERELY, PRIME MINISTER.
UNQUOTE.

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3. TEXT OF MARCH 24 LETTER: QUOTE: EXCELLENCY,
I AM WRITING TO YOU IN CONNECTION WITH THE SRI LANKA AID-GROUP MEETING TO BE HELD ON THE 9TH OF APRIL, 1975.

THE WORLD BANK HAS RECENTLY REVIEWED THE CURRENT ECONOMIC SITUATION IN SRI LANKA. THEIR REPORT, IDENTIFYING THE PROBLEMS AND THE IMMEDIATE NEEDS OF SRI LANKA'S ECONOMY, HAS BEEN CIRCULATED AMONG COUNTRIES OF THE AID-

GROUP.

AS THE WORLD BANK REPORTS INDICATE, OUR EFFORTS TO STEER THE ECONOMY OF SRI LANKA ON A PATH OF RAPID DEVELOPMENT CONSISTENT WITH OUR OBJECTIVES OF SOCIAL JUSTICE, HAVE BEEN OVERWHELMED BY FACTORS BEYOND OUR CONTROL. THE TERMS OF TRADE HAVE DETERIORATED ALARMINGLY DURING THE LAST FEW YEARS. WORLD MARKET PRICES OF OUR ESSENTIAL

IMPORTS LIKE FOOD, FERTILIZER AND OIL HAVE REACHED ALMOST PROHIBITIVE LEVELS. UNFAVOURABLE WEATHER CONDITIONS IN SRI LANKA HAVE RETARDED AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION. SRI LANKA THUS CONTINUES TO REQUIRE EXTERNAL ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE TO SUSTAIN HER ECONOMY AND TO SUPPORT HER ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT EFFORT.

I AM GRATEFUL FOR THE GENEROUS ASSISTANCE EXTENDED BY YOUR GOVERNMENT TO SRI LANKA IN THE PAST. IN VIEW OF THE CONTINUING NEED OF SRI LANKA FOR ADDITIONAL FOREIGN RESOURCES, I WOULD APPRECIATE IT GREATLY IF YOUR GOVERNMENT WOULD FIND IT POSSIBLE TO MAKE A PLEDGE OF SUBSTANTIAL ASSISTANCE AT THE FORTHCOMING MEETING OF THE AID-GROUP.

WITH ASSURANCES OF MY HIGHEST CONSIDERATION.
PRIME MINISTER (SIRIMA R.D. BANDARANAIKE). UNQUOTE. KISSINGER

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Margaret P. Grafeld
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